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USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

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PEOPLE ON THE FARM

Growing Oranges. A fourth booklet has joined USDA's People On The Farm series. As in the earlier booklets, the new publication takes you along on a visit with the people who live and work on the farms where America's food is grown. The latest trip is to Florida and California orange farms--or groves, as they are properly called. Floridians Art Mathias, Cecil Hull, and Tom Sasser give you an idea of what it's like to produce, harvest and market oranges in their state; Ronald Davis and his family explain the California orange growing business. You will learn when an orange goes to market as an orange and when it goes as juice; what it's like to sweat through a frost warning; and how to identify the kind of orange you buy in the store. Copies of "People On The Farm: Growing Oranges" as well as of the other booklets in the series (Dairying, Broiler Growing, and Corn/Hog Farming), are available free from Room 460-A, Special Reports Division, Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

GUARANTEED HOME LOANS

Ready To Go. USDA's rural housing credit agency, the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) is set to implement a guaranteed housing loan program for families in rural areas. Private lenders who make the loans are guaranteed repayment of 90 percent of any losses on principal and interest by FmHA. Borrowers must contribute three percent down payment for loans up to \$25,000 and five percent for larger amounts. Interest rates and terms of repayment are agreed upon by the borrower and the lender. The loans may be used to buy, build, improve, repair or rehabilitate homes and related facilities. Homes may be on individual tracts or in subdivisions, and a borrower may buy an existing house and lot or buy a site on which to build. Eligibility for the program is limited to families with adjusted incomes between \$15,600 and \$20,000 to purchase or construct homes in the open countryside or in towns of less than 10,000 population. Exceptions are: Alaska and Hawaii have somewhat higher adjusted income limits and loans are available in certain towns between 10,000 and 20,000 population. Loan forms and further information can be obtained at your local county office of the Farmers Home Administration.



FOREST SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Help For The Helpers. USDA's Forest Service is fortunate that many people do not heed the advice, "Never volunteer for anything." Since 1942, when the Volunteers in the National Forest Act was passed, more than 36,000 individuals have contributed work valued at over \$7 million to the benefit of the national forests. Citizen volunteers have provided information to forest visitors, assisted at special events, participated in environmental education programs, conducted research, cleared trails, and cleaned up litter. One of the most successful efforts is stationing "hosts" at campgrounds to answer questions, explain camping rules, and illustrate good camping techniques. According to Forest Service officials, vandalism, litter, and associated problems have decreased markedly at "hosted" campgrounds. Some citizens cannot afford to volunteer their services unless some reimbursement is made for such things as lunches, transportation, and lodging. The Forest Service was limited to a total of \$100,000 per year to pay volunteers for those out-of-pocket expenses. Because of this limitation, hundreds of volunteers had to be turned down, even though the Forest Service could have used more than twice the number in the program. A new law, effective October 1, removed the \$100,000 limitation, allowing the Forest Service to increase the use of citizen volunteers. Persons interested in volunteering their services to enhance the environment and assist in national forest resource conservation should contact their nearest Forest Service office. Hi ho, hi ho!

TALENTED TELEPHONE SYSTEM

Broadband For Footville. The Footville (Wis.) Telephone Company recently received a loan from USDA's Rural Electrification Administration (REA) for a new telephone system. This is good news in Footville, of course, and it should be of interest to other rural communities. The reason: It is the first REA loan made for facilities to provide broadband telephone services. This means that subscribers to the Footville system will have private-line telephone service, eight channels of commercial television, and an arrangement that can potentially provide them a wide variety of other communication services--all via a single wire. The way it works is that the REA loan will be used to construct the telephone portion of the coaxial system; private financing will be used to construct the television portion. Television companies will lease the wire for programs. Revenue from the telephone service and the television leasing can provide the subscribers with other services such as load control devices for conserving electricity, utility meter readings, telemedicine, transmission of data for operating farms and businesses, and fire and police protection. Broadband communications are not new, but such systems are not generally available in sparsely-populated rural areas. Often these areas have limited communications or are not wired for sound at all.

USDA'S SUPER GARDEN

The National Arboretum. Magnificent seasonal displays of azaleas, intrepid dawn redwoods (an almost-extinct tree whose living existence was unknown until 1945), a priceless bonsai collection--these plus many other native and exotic plants can be found at USDA's National Arboretum, right in Washington, D.C. It is a delightful place to visit; it is also a hardworking horticultural storehouse, a plant introduction station, a research laboratory, and a classroom. A new publication--one side is a colorful poster; the flip side has text and color photos--explains what you can see at the Arboretum and some of the ongoing work. Single free copies are available from: Education Office, U.S. National Arboretum, 24th & R Sts., NE, Washington, D.C. 20002.

FEEDING THE FAMILY

The Cost Of It All. If you used one of the four USDA food plans, the chart below will give you an idea of what you spent for food per week in September. The cost figures, compiled by food economists of USDA's Science and Education Administration (SEA), are based on the U.S. National averages. USDA food plans, including the thrifty food plan used in setting the coupon allotment for the Food Stamp Program, are described in the booklet, "Family Food Budgeting for Good Meals and Good Nutrition" (G-94). Copies are available for 35 cents each from Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK (SEPTEMBER 1978)

	<u>Thrifty plan</u>	<u>Low-cost plan</u>	<u>Moderate- cost plan</u>	<u>Liberal plan</u>
FAMILIES				
Young couple.....	\$26.00	\$33.90	\$42.60	\$50.90
Elderly couple.....	23.30	30.30	37.50	44.70
Family of 4 with preschool children.....	36.60	47.20	59.00	70.60
Family of 4 with elementary school children.....	44.10	56.90	71.50	85.50
INDIVIDUALS*				
Women				
20-54 years.....	10.60	13.80	17.20	20.50
55 years and over.....	9.60	12.50	15.40	18.20
Men				
20-54 years.....	13.00	17.00	21.50	25.80
55 years and over.....	11.60	15.00	18.70	22.40
Children				
1-2 years.....	5.90	7.50	9.20	11.00
3-5 years.....	7.10	8.90	11.10	13.30
6-8 years.....	9.10	11.60	14.60	17.40
9-11 years.....	11.40	14.50	18.20	21.80
Girls 12-19 years.....	10.90	13.80	17.10	20.40
Boys 12-14 years.....	12.20	15.40	19.30	23.10
15-19 years.....	13.40	17.10	21.50	25.80

* Cost of food at home for any family can be figured by totaling costs shown for individuals of sex and age of various members of the family as follows:

- o For those eating all meals at home (or carrying some meals from home), use amounts shown.
- o For those eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from amount in table for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent or one-fourth the cost shown.
- o For guests, include for each meal eaten, 5 percent of amount shown in table for the proper age group.

Next, adjust the total figure if more or fewer than four people generally eat at the family table. Costs shown are for individuals in 4-person families. Adjustment is necessary because larger families tend to buy and use foods more economically than smaller ones. Thus, for a 1-person family, add 20 percent; 2 persons, add 10 percent; 3, add 5 percent; 4, use as is; 5 or 6, subtract 5 percent; 7 or more, subtract 10 percent.

FACTS ABOUT THINGS

Beef Fat. Beef fat is sometimes yellow; sometimes white. The color is related to what the animal eats. Cattle fed a large proportion of grass as part of their rations generally store carotene in the fat. This gives the fat a yellow color. Cattle fed a ration high in corn, milo, or other feed grains have whiter fat with a low carotene content. Once consumers tried to avoid beef with yellow fat since it indicated a grass-fed animal and the meat might be less tender. However, color is no longer used as a basis for USDA grading of carcasses. The best guides to tenderness in beef are in the USDA grade and the cut. You can depend on the tenderness of most beef cuts graded USDA Prime or USDA Choice. Beef cuts are classed as tender and less tender, depending on where the cut comes from on the animal. Less tender cuts come from muscles that are exercised the most.

Energy Costs. Energy for producing, processing and marketing food takes 12 percent of the \$200 billion consumer food bill in the U.S. Consumers spend another \$11.5 billion in energy costs for food storage, preparation, and consumption.

Margarine. During the Franco-Prussian War in the 1870's, Napoleon III held a contest to get a satisfactory substitute for butter. Oleomargarine won. The first margarine was made by churning beef oleo oil, milk, water and a vegetable dye together. Today's margarine is made by mixing water and salt with animal fats or vegetable oils, such as those from soybeans, corn, cottonseed, coconuts, peanuts, and others. The mixture is churned with pasteurized skim milk, cream, whole milk, combination of nonfat dry milk and water or finely ground soybeans and water--or various combinations of these. It may also contain butter, salt, artificial coloring, and vitamins A and D. Under federal standards of identity, the product must contain at least 80 percent fat and the label must clearly state which types of fat are used.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, Special Reports Division, Rm. 459-A, Washington, DC 20250, or Tel. 202-447-5437.

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